

Appln. No. 10/782,888  
Amd. dated December 23, 2005  
Reply to Office Action of September 26, 2005

**REMARKS**

The Examiner's action dated September 26, 2005, has been received, and its contents carefully noted.

In response to the objection to the drawings, presented on page 2 of the Action, the recitation in claim 5 that was considered to not be illustrated has been canceled, thereby obviating this objection. It is therefore requested that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

For the sake of completeness, it is noted that claim 1 has been amended to specify that the major body has a threaded bore to connect the body to a first counterpart. This bore is different from the bore defined in claim 6. Specifically, the bore defined in claim 5 is illustrated as blind hole 34 in Figure 1 of the application drawing.

In response to the objections to claims 1 and 7, these claims have been amended to adopt the Examiner's suggestion. In response to the rejection of claim 10, that claim has been canceled.

Furthermore, claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define the contribution of the invention over the prior art and for this reason the rejection of claim 1, as

well as the claims dependent therefrom, is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been rejected as unpatentable over applicant's admitted prior art in view of the U.S. patent to Marunaka.

The present invention provides a novel ball-stud joint that is constructed to solve a problem that is disclosed neither in applicant's prior art nor in Marunaka. Specifically, the purpose of the present invention is to provide a ball-stud joint having a novel structure that allows an end of the ball-stud to be riveted to a counterpart after the parts of the joints have been assembled together, together with their dust proof cover.

For this purpose, the stud is provided with a flange having a flat surface (16) that faces toward the ball and a sloping side extending radially outwardly from the flat surface, the sloping side being constructed to come into engagement with a die jig in order to allow a riveting operation to be performed. Because of the presence of the sloping surface that extends away from the ball, it is possible to mount the joint in a riveting tool after it has been assembled together with its dust proof cover.

This stud structure is not disclosed in the prior art relied upon to support the rejection of claim 1.

The Examiner acknowledges that it is certainly not disclosed in applicant's admitted prior art.

It is also not disclosed by Marunaka.

Marunaka discusses a ball joint that happens to have a sloping surface 27, the purpose of which is not disclosed in that reference. There is certainly nothing in the reference to suggest that the surface 27 is intended to cooperate with a riveting tool. Simply stated, there is nothing in the disclosure of Marunaka that would lead one skilled in the art to modify a joint according to applicant's admitted prior art in a manner to arrive at the present invention.

It is well understood that in order to justify a combination of reference teachings, there must be something in the references, or elsewhere in the prior art, to suggest such a combination. In the present case, there is nothing in the prior art to suggest the incorporation of chamfered surface 27 in the stud of the joint of applicant's admitted prior art.

Even more clearly, the prior art does not provide any suggestion for a structure that includes a flat surface facing toward the ball and a sloping side extending radially

outwardly from the flat surface. This combination of structural features, as clearly shown in the application drawings, in particularly Figures 1 and 6, makes it possible to assemble the dust proof cover to the joint before the joint is installed in the riveting tool. The flat surface constitutes one side of a groove into which the dust cover is fitted.

Furthermore, neither applicant's admitted prior art nor Marunaka is concerned with a dust cover. A dust cover cannot be installed in a joint according to applicant's admitted prior art prior to riveting, because the groove in which the dust cover would be fitted is needed to receive a component of the riveting tool. Marunaka, for its part, is silent as to how a dust cover would be installed. If one were to consider providing the joint according to applicant's admitted prior art with the chamfered shoulder of Marunaka, there is absolutely no reason to assume that such a shoulder would be associated with a flat surface.

It is therefore submitted that claim 1 clearly distinguishes patentably over any reasonable combination of the applied references at least by the recitations that the joint includes a flange formed integrally around the stud, the flange having a flat surface facing toward the ball and a

sloping side extending radially outwardly from the flat surface to an outside periphery of the flange in such a way that the sloping side can come into engagement with a bearing area on a lower die jig while the dust cover remains installed during a riveting operation.

In order to further distinguish over the prior art, new claim 11 adds the further limitation that the stud has an annular groove that is bounded by the flat surface and into which a mouth of the dust proof cover is fitted. This structure is shown, in particular, in Figures 4 and 6 of the application drawing and is described in the Specification, for example at page 15, lines 15-19 and page 21, lines 8-15.

All of the other claims should be considered allowable in view of their dependency from claim 1 and the rejection of claim 5 is traversed on the ground that claim 5 depends from claim 1 and should be considered allowable alongtherewith.

In view of the foregoing, it is requested that the objections and rejections of record be reconsidered and withdrawn, that claims 1-7, 9 and 11 be allowed and that the Application be found in allowable condition.

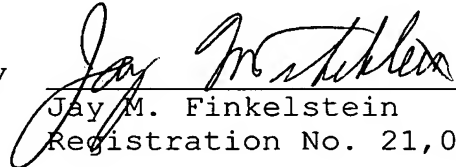
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If the above amendment should not now place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call undersigned counsel to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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